

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A system and method of generating an ordered search list via a pay-  
for-performance search engine by determining various account balances to  
determine if a search listing is given preferential placement in a search list. If  
a web site advertiser's account is below a threshold, for example zero dollars,  
the search listing associated with the advertiser is not given preferential  
placement in a search list regardless of the advertiser bid amount for that  
search listing. Various balances may be used. Some of the balances may be  
closer to real-time balances and other may be more accurate, for example by  
10 removing click charges that were later determined to be non-chargeable. By  
using the various account balances, the pay-for-performance search engine  
prevents over-delivery of preferential placement and possible over-billing of  
the advertisers.  
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